

Claims

- [c1] 1.A substrate coating apparatus comprising:
a deposition chamber adapted to be maintained at subatmospheric pressure;
support means in said deposition chamber for a substrate, said substrate having at least one surface; and
a set of expanding thermal plasma generating means associated with said deposition chamber, said generating means being adapted to deposit a coating on said substrate, said set comprising at least two of said means and all of said means in said set being codirectionally oriented.
- [c2] 2.The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the expanding thermal plasma generating means are wall-stabilized DC arc generators.
- [c3] 3.The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said expanding thermal plasma generating means are within said deposition chamber.
- [c4] 4.The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said expanding thermal plasma generating means are outside but in communication with said deposition chamber.
- [c5] 5The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a movement actuator adapted to move the substrate support means past said set of expanding thermal plasma generating means.
- [c6] 6.The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the substrate support means is a hook, frame, arm or clamp.
- [c7] 7.The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the substrate support means is a flat panel adapted to provide support for the entire substrate.
- [c8] 8.The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a shutter in said deposition chamber between said substrate support and said expanding thermal plasma generating means, said shutter containing one or more apertures configured so as to allow overlapping of adjacent plasma plumes but block the low power edge portions of said streams.

- [c9] 9.The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the expanding thermal plasma generating means are in a straight line parallel to the plane of motion of the substrate support means, and with the center axes of the plasma plumes produced by said expanding thermal plasma generating means oriented perpendicular to the plane of motion of the substrate support means.
- [c10] 10.The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the expanding thermal plasma generating means are in a zigzag configuration in a plane parallel to the plane of motion of the substrate support means, and with the center axes of the plasma plumes produced by said expanding thermal plasma generating means oriented perpendicular to the plane of motion of the substrate support means.
- [c11] 11.The apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the angle between successive lines leading from one expanding thermal plasma generating means to the next is in the range of 10-80 ° .
- [c12] 12.The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising at least one temperature control means located and adapted to heat or cool substrate regions spaced from the center axes of the expanding thermal plasma generating means.
- [c13] 13.The apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said temperature control means are heating means.
- [c14] 14.The apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said temperature control means are located on either side of and between the expanding thermal plasma generating means.
- [c15] 15.The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein said temperature control means are located upstream, with respect to movement of the substrate support means, from the expanding thermal plasma generating means.
- [c16] 16.The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the expanding thermal plasma generating means are located such that the anodes thereof are at a distance of 20-40 cm from the substrate.
- [c17] 17.The apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the expanding thermal plasma

generating means are spaced so that their center axes are about 10–21 cm apart.

- [c18] 18.The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the apparatus comprises a plurality of sets of expanding thermal plasma generating means, located to deposit coatings on more than one side of a substrate.
- [c19] 19.The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the apparatus comprises a plurality of sets of expanding thermal plasma generating means, located to deposit successive coatings on a substrate.
- [c20] 20.The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the locations and configurations of said expanding thermal plasma generating means are adapted to deposit a coating on a curved substrate.
- [c21] 21.The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the apparatus comprises a plurality of deposition chambers and sets of expanding thermal plasma generating means, for deposition of plural coating layers on a substrate.
- [c22] 22.A substrate coating apparatus comprising:
a plurality of deposition chambers, each of said chambers adapted to be maintained at subatmospheric pressure;
support means adapted to convey a substrate through said deposition chambers in succession;
a movement actuator adapted to move said substrate support means and substrate through said deposition chambers in succession;
a plurality of sets of expanding thermal plasma generating means associated with said deposition chambers, said generating means being adapted to deposit a coating on said substrate, each of said sets comprising at least two of said means and all of said means in each of said sets being codirectionally oriented;
said generating means in each set being oriented in a straight line or a zigzag configuration, said line or configuration being parallel to the plane of motion of the substrate support means, and said generating means being located such that the anodes thereof are at a distance of about 20–40 cm from the substrate and spaced so that their center axes are about 10–21 cm apart; and

heating means located and adapted to heat substrate regions spaced from the center axes of said generators.

[c23] 23.The apparatus according to claim 22, wherein a plurality of sets of expanding thermal plasma generating means are located to deposit coatings on more than one side of a substrate.

[c24] 24.A method for coating a substrate, the method comprising generating a set of at least two expanding thermal plasma plumes to produce plasma enhanced chemical vapor deposition or PECVD of a coating on said substrate, each of said plumes in said set being codirectionally oriented.

[c25] 25.The method according to claim 24, wherein the substrate is a thermoplastic substrate.

[c26] 26.The method according to claim 25, wherein the thermoplastic is a polycarbonate.

[c27] 27.The method according to claim 24, wherein the plasma is an argon or argon-oxygen-organosiloxane plasma.

[c28] 28.The method according to claim 27, wherein the coating is silica-based.

[c29] 29.The method according to claim 24, wherein the substrate is moved past at least one set of expanding thermal plasma generating means.

[c30] 30.The method according to claim 24, wherein substrate regions spaced from the center axes of expanding thermal plasma generating means producing said coating are heated prior to or simultaneously with the coating operation.

[c31] 31.The method according to claim 24, wherein a plurality of sets of plasma plumes is generated to deposit coatings on more than one side of said substrate.

[c32] 32.The method according to claim 24, wherein a plurality of sets of plasma plumes is generated to deposit successive coatings on said substrate.

[c33] 33.The method according to claim 24, wherein the substrate is planar.

- [c34] 34.The method according to claim 24, wherein the substrate is curved.
- [c35] 35.A method for coating a polycarbonate substrate, the method comprising generating a plurality of sets of at least two expanding thermal plasma plumes to produce successive coatings on said substrate while moving said substrate past said sets of plumes, each of said plumes in said set being codirectionally oriented; said coatings being silica-based and the plasmas being argon or argon-oxygen plasmas.
- [c36] 36.An article coated by the method of claim 24.

APPENDIX 1
APPENDIX 2
APPENDIX 3
APPENDIX 4
APPENDIX 5
APPENDIX 6
APPENDIX 7
APPENDIX 8
APPENDIX 9
APPENDIX 10
APPENDIX 11
APPENDIX 12
APPENDIX 13
APPENDIX 14
APPENDIX 15
APPENDIX 16
APPENDIX 17
APPENDIX 18
APPENDIX 19
APPENDIX 20
APPENDIX 21
APPENDIX 22
APPENDIX 23
APPENDIX 24
APPENDIX 25
APPENDIX 26
APPENDIX 27
APPENDIX 28
APPENDIX 29
APPENDIX 30
APPENDIX 31
APPENDIX 32
APPENDIX 33
APPENDIX 34
APPENDIX 35
APPENDIX 36
APPENDIX 37
APPENDIX 38
APPENDIX 39
APPENDIX 40
APPENDIX 41
APPENDIX 42
APPENDIX 43
APPENDIX 44
APPENDIX 45
APPENDIX 46
APPENDIX 47
APPENDIX 48
APPENDIX 49
APPENDIX 50
APPENDIX 51
APPENDIX 52
APPENDIX 53
APPENDIX 54
APPENDIX 55
APPENDIX 56
APPENDIX 57
APPENDIX 58
APPENDIX 59
APPENDIX 60
APPENDIX 61
APPENDIX 62
APPENDIX 63
APPENDIX 64
APPENDIX 65
APPENDIX 66
APPENDIX 67
APPENDIX 68
APPENDIX 69
APPENDIX 70
APPENDIX 71
APPENDIX 72
APPENDIX 73
APPENDIX 74
APPENDIX 75
APPENDIX 76
APPENDIX 77
APPENDIX 78
APPENDIX 79
APPENDIX 80
APPENDIX 81
APPENDIX 82
APPENDIX 83
APPENDIX 84
APPENDIX 85
APPENDIX 86
APPENDIX 87
APPENDIX 88
APPENDIX 89
APPENDIX 90
APPENDIX 91
APPENDIX 92
APPENDIX 93
APPENDIX 94
APPENDIX 95
APPENDIX 96
APPENDIX 97
APPENDIX 98
APPENDIX 99
APPENDIX 100